

# Continuous improvement to evolve your **sales force**

## Kaizen: change for the better

The transformation of post-war Japanese manufacturing from a by-word for poor quality into the industrial powerhouse and quality touchstone of the late 20th century was due in no small part to something called 'kaizen'. A simple translation of this is "change for the better" and specifically in the context of Japanese manufacturing: 'continuous improvement'. Nowadays this applies to all aspects of business and business processes.

"Perfect is the Enemy of Good"

At the very heart of the kaizen approach is a re-stating of what our enterprise objectives should be: Perfection is illusory, unachievable and as a goal will result in little progress and ultimately failure. Instead we should aim to continually improve everything that we do. Rather than try to design perfection, we should rather do the best that we can today and look to improve all the time.

Implicit in kaizen is the constant cycle of 'plan', 'do', 'check' and then 'act'.

One of the best-known proponents of this system is Toyota. The Toyota Production System built around kaizen, has been copied and adopted by significant and successful companies all around the world. If we synthesize down the key tenets of Kaizen and the 'Toyota Way', we end up with a plan for improvement that is applicable for all enterprises, processes, implementations and projects.

## Continuous Improvement in the Enterprise

- Challenge (Create a long-term vision, meeting challenges with courage and creativity to realise our dreams.)
- Kaizen (Improve our business operations continuously, always driving for innovation and evolution.)
- Genchi Genbutsu (Go to the source to find the facts to make correct decisions.)
- The right process will produce the right results
- Add value to the organisation by developing your people and partners
- Continuously solving root problems drives organisational learning

## Kaizen in a Salesforce Environment?

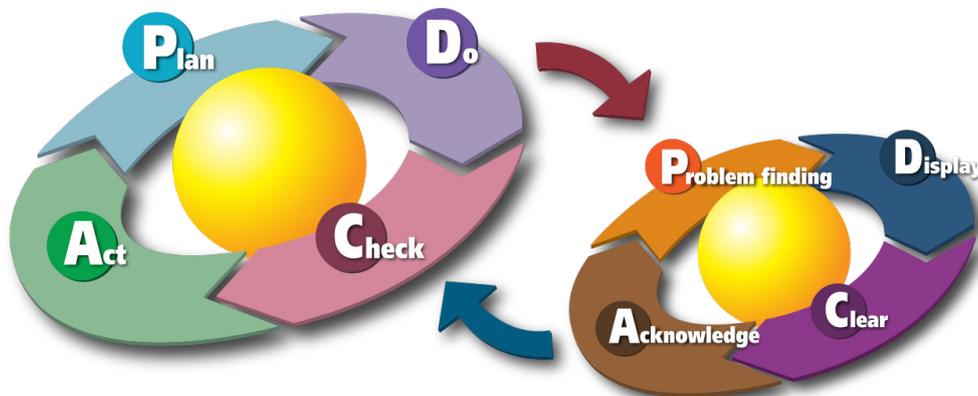
Businesses do not stand still and neither should the systems they employ. It is important that our definition of systems should include everything that is relevant – applications, people, procedures and platform. All of these aspects change all of the time, as do the markets, products, regulatory background and competitive environments in which enterprises operate. Implementations of Salesforce that aim to produce the perfect solution will fail...apart from the fact that there is no such thing as 'perfection', even if there were, what is perfect today would be rendered imperfect tomorrow due to the changes around the system. 'Perfect' systems also tend to lack the feedback loops that keep them current, as there is an assumption that perfection needs no further attention. Sadly, this is also a feature of the most imperfect implementations – they are simply switched on with little reference to the other system aspects and then have no process to enable improvement.

It should perhaps come as no surprise that a company that has the word "improved" in its title would be committed to the notion of kaizen and the application of this philosophy to what we do and what our customers do.

If we think about what the challenges are for most businesses with their sales systems we see the following recurring issues:

- Lack of long-term planning, objectives and measurement of systems
- Sales (and end users) not sufficiently taken into account in planning
- Processes not laid down or followed properly
- People and partners do not see the value in the systems
- Organisational knowledge not accessible or pertinent
- No program to monitor and improve

All of which lead to a system that is poorly adopted, does not provide management with the returns they were expecting and adds no value to sales.



# 6 Steps to Continuously Improve Your Sales Force and Sales

## 1. Document and publish your objectives and vision

- Share the plan
- Be creative about how to reach your goals
- Be realistic about your approach and ambitious with your vision

## 2. Put in place feedback loops

- Measure everything!
- What is being useful?
  - Do it more and do it better
- What is working?
  - Eliminate or improve
- Start again

## 3. Involve end users

- Employ mechanisms that allow users to comment and suggest
- Look at systems' behaviour - early warning of potential problems can allow you to avoid them
- Use the feedback to drive forward and re-plan

## 4. Enforce and adapt your sale processes

- Salesforce controls your processes – make sure they are producing the intended results
- Processes are there for a reason – make sure they are followed
- Processes need to include feedback to users so that they are clear why something is being done and what is in it for them

## 5. Sales people and partners are key assets for an organisation – they need to be cultivated and developed

- Better sales people sell more
- Sales performance depends on how sales are fed: targets, education, collateral, leads, rewards and knowledge.
- The sales organisation that does not nourish its people has a greater churn and static or worsening performance
- Listen to sales, make it clear why Salesforce matters to them as well as the organisation
- Enable them with the tools and information to be successful

## 6. The enterprise that does not learn will get left behind

- As everything around us changes we need to stay one step ahead
- The organisation must look at what is happening around it, constantly examine its systems to see what works, what needs changing and adapt
- What the organisation learns MUST be shared with the users

If the enterprise adopts this approach of continuous improvement it seems clear that it will avoid the pitfalls that catch out many businesses. The notion of constantly reacting to the world around and then changing and improving seems to be implicitly true and obvious: That is possibly because it is remarkably similar to the ideas of evolution and survival of the fittest!

**“An agile workforce will only flourish in an organisation that, in the face of change, is prepared and equipped to bend and flex. And that process demands rigorous oversight.”**

Accenture, Liquid Workforce

**Improve to survive! Improved Apps can make this a reality for you. We don't pretend to have all the answers, but we can help you regain control of application adoption and user compliance, across your entire Salesforce deployment.**

# About Improved Apps

Improved Apps Ltd was founded in 2011 to deliver innovative applications that drive Salesforce adoption through ease of use and an enhanced user experience. We support customers' Salesforce cloud strategies – which are about creating a unified experience across:

- Standard Salesforce applications – CRM, Console, Communities, and mobile
- Enterprise applications built on the Salesforce platform
- Third-party applications bought through the AppExchange
- Applications that are non-native but integrated for access by Salesforce users

Our Improved Apps are born out of many years of real-world Salesforce.com experience – implementations, developments, training, and our own day-to-day administration and usage. Our applications are all 100% native salesforce – guaranteed and trusted.

